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ABSTRACT

Materials from a symposium on teaching practices and reading problems are provided in this report. Following a description of the meeting and a copy of the agenda, the report presents seven symposium papers that discuss the following topics: (1) teacher preparation in reading, (2) reading and the deaf child, (3) teaching reading in social studies, (4) multiethnic teacher-pupil interaction, (5) promotion and retention, (6) the use and effectiveness of paraprofessionals, and (7) school readiness. (HTH)

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# PROCEEDINGS OF THE FOURTH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON READING EDUCATION

1983

*Edited by*
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*We acknowledge the efforts of our graduate students and others who presented papers for this Symposium.*

*Acknowledgement with gratitude is also extended to the contributions made by the Responders, whose extensive work in the field of reading, language, research and administration have added the necessary "real world" dimension to the discussions following each set of papers.*

*Special acknowledgement is extended to President Jose Q. Cruz, Academic Vice President George Boughton, and Michael Caldwell, Dean of Education, without whose support and encouragement this endeavor would not have been possible.*

*Acknowledgement is also extended to the Audio-Visual Department of the R.F.K. Library under Dean Kenneth Bickford for assistance and technical support.*

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CHARLEEN D. PERYON

## DESCRIPTION

The Reading Education Department of the University of Guam, under the direction of Dr. Charleen Peryon, held its Fourth Annual Symposium on reading education on November 9, 1983, in the Health Science Building Auditorium. The purpose of the annual symposium is to recognize and encourage scholarly activities of graduate students in the department and to promote continued interdepartmental dialogue among the disciplines that interface with the teaching of reading.

The event opened with brief remarks by Dr. Charleen Peryon. She commended the audience for their concern for improving the teaching of reading as evidenced by their attendance.

Dr. Michael Caldwell, Dean of the College of Education, discussed the challenge of educating great numbers of students in English, not only on Guam, but throughout Micronesia and the Pacific Basin. In order for these students to compete in business, the professionals and trades, they need to be trained in the common language of English. As the only United States institution of higher education here, we all share in this great responsibility.

The major focus of this year's Symposium dealt with teaching practices and reading problems.

After each group of papers was presented, a panel of responders reacted by asking questions, presenting different views or aspects of the problems on the information presented, and by adding information from their experiences as practitioners in their respective fields of expertise. The purpose of discussions involving responders was to augment ideas and reports culled from literature by the presenters. No debates were intended.

Attendance at the Symposium was by invitation. Reading and language specialists from the university and public and private educational agencies on the island were invited. Seventy-five persons attended.

*FOURTH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON READING*

*Sponsored by the Reading Education Department*

*College of Education*

*University of Guam*

*Health Science Building Auditorium*

*Wednesday, November 9, 1983*

*PROGRAM*

2:30 *Welcome and Introductions*
*Charleen D. Peryon, Ph.D., Chairperson*
*Michael Caldwell, Ph.D., Dean*

2:35 *Presenters*

*Ms. Gina Morelli, Secondary Teacher*
*"Teacher Preparation in Reading"*

*Ms. Jacqueline T. Cruz, Teacher of the Deaf*
*"Reading and the Deaf Child"*

*Ms. Bertha M.Q. Leon Guerrero, Secondary Teacher*
*"Teaching Reading in Social Studies"*

*Ms. Lolita Camit, Elementary Teacher*
*"Causes of Dyslexia"*

3:20 *Comments from Responders, followed by those from the audience*

3:40 *Presenters*

*Dr. Lourdes Klitzkie, Assistant Professor*
*"Multi-ethnic Teacher-Pupil Interaction"*

*Ms. Marilyn Salas, Reading Specialist*
*"Promotion and Retention"*

*Dr. Charleen Peryon, Associate Professor*
*"Use and Effectiveness of Paraprofessionals*

*Ms. Bobbie Simpson, Instructor*
*University of Indiana*
*"A Question of Readiness: When Should a Child Begin School"*
*(In absentia)*

4:15 *Comments from Responders, followed by those from the audience*

4:35 *Closing Remarks*
*Charleen D. Peryon*

*Farewell until next year! Si Yuus Ma'ase!*

## RESPONDERS

Anthony Kallinger, Professor
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Teacher of the Year, Runner-Up

A

# *Teacher Preparation in Reading:*

## *A Review*

*Gina L. Morelli*

*A paper presented at the Fourth Annual*

*Symposium on Reading Education*

*University of Guam*

*Mangilao, Guam 96913*

*November 9, 1983*

*Abstract*

*Teaching a person to read is an undertaking of considerable magnitude. This paper examines teacher preparation in the area of reading, and reviews literature related to the subject. Preservice education, inservice education, and the less formal, albeit potentially powerful, influences of teacher mentoring and personal development are explored.*

## Teacher Preparation in Reading:

## A Review

The development of language in infants and young children is an extremely complex process (Lillie, 1975). Learning to read, then, is considerably more complicated, since in some respects written language is harder to process and discover the meaning of than is oral language (Fishbein and Emans, 1972). It follows that since learning to read is a complex process, the task of guiding a person in the acquisition of the many skills involved in effective reading is an undertaking of considerable magnitude.

Undoubtedly, this accounts for much of the disparity in teaching methods of reading. It also offers an explanation for the wide variety of approaches to reading instruction that have been used in the classrooms. Justin Fishbein and Robert Emans (1972), in their book A Question of Competence, report:

> Some have emphasized whole words as beginning units, others phonics; some meaning, some silent reading, some oral reading. Some have added diacritical markings; others have changed the alphabet. Some have used nonsense words; others have used word families. Regardless of the method used, or the emphasis in instruction, most children do learn to read (pg. 9).

Needless to say, Fishbein and Emans' optimism falls flat for those students who do not learn to read, as well as for those students who emerge from high school as functional illiterates. Indeed, the problems of the American educational system have become a national issue, especially since we have fallen behind other nations in teaching excellence (American Teacher, 1983).

The purpose of this paper is to review reports on teacher preparation in the area of reading.

Teacher preparation can be broadly divided into two categories: preservice education and inservice education. Preservice education can in turn be divided into two components: coursework and the student-teaching practica. The first area to be examined is preservice coursework.

It is important to recognize that teacher certification rests with each individual state (or territory). Each state, in turn, relies upon individual institutions to develop programs that incorporate its guidelines into specific courses. This sets up a system by which the institution interprets certification standards according to coursework, and specifies which courses fit certification standards (Maple, 1983).

There are many shortcomings inherent in this system. For instance, if completing coursework provided a guarantee of teaching quality, it would logically follow that individuals who elect to complete more courses than are required to meet minimum certification criteria would emerge as significantly more effective teachers. This simply is not true. On the contrary, the fact that the quality of teaching varies from teacher to teacher suggests that neither the teacher preparation education programs nor the certification process insures teaching excellence (Maple, 1983).

From this analysis it is clear that teacher preparation programs should not be either wholly credited or wholly faulted for the caliber of teachers who enter the field. They can, however, make a significant impact. If curricula for teacher education programs are developed around well-defined criteria that accurately determine acquisition of teaching competencies, formal academic coursework can provide teachers with a solid theoretical foundation and a valuable knowledge base.

Are most teacher education programs living up to this goal? Apparently, the answer is often no. Bailey, Durkin, Nurss, and Stammer (1982) report:

> An IRA-sponsored survey finds that many Canadian and U.S. preservice and inservice teachers are not being prepared adequately to teach reading in kindergarten (page 307).

Although some of the blame for this inadequacy is attributable to the exceedingly rapid shifts in characteristics of today's five-year-olds, teacher education programs must accept partial responsibility.

To support this, the following data was revealed: Although there was a trend toward requiring preservice students to take two reading courses, the additional requirement was often fulfilled by courses in language arts, children's literature, language development, word recognition skills, diagnosis and correction of reading, or even early childhood education curriculum or methods, instead of a course in early childhood reading. In fact, only 30 percent of the preservice reading courses offered were specifically designed for early childhood education (nursery - 2, k-3, or primary) (Bailey, Durkin, Nurss and Stammer, 1982).

The results of shortcomings in early childhood teacher education programs are highly visible in the classroom. In her observational study of reading instruction in grades three through six, Durkin reported that practically no comprehension instruction occurred in the rooms she observed (1979). This is, no doubt, a reflection on teacher preparation programs, since a teacher who is aware of comprehension tasks can provide instruction to help students develop relevant conceptual frameworks and strategies of inquiry (Kingore & Kurth, 1981).

Durkin contends that if teachers are to improve their comprehension instruction, they must know multiple ways to apply comprehension skills to specific skill areas (1979).

If the findings of this survey on early childhood education teacher preparation programs appear disappointing, the scenario for secondary education teacher preparation programs with regard to training in the area of reading is even more discouraging. Despite the fact that reading is an integral part of most subject areas on a secondary level, many states do not require secondary education teacher candidates to take even one course in reading to qualify for initial certification. Surveys do indicate a trend toward changing this, however, and an increasing number of states are mandating a course in reading for secondary certification (Bader, 1975). Additionally, some states are attempting to compensate for preservice program weaknesses by requiring teachers to take at least one course in reading for their continuing certification.

These are obviously steps in the right direction. Nonetheless, the multitudes of teachers who have taught secondary education for years despite their lack of expertise in how to teach reading suggests that an all-encompassing plan might be more appropriate. One approach is to adopt guidelines that specify either coursework or workshops in reading for all practicing teachers.

Finally, to look at that portion of preservice preparation that is designed to be the meeting grounds between the theoretical world of academia and its application in the classroom: the student-teaching practica. One way to forge this bridge is strongly to identify important teacher competencies and then evaluate each teacher candidate's expertise in them during the student-teaching practica. If a minimum set

of competencies is established, then "passing the practica" must be directly related to demonstrating at least all minimum competencies (Maple, 1983).

This idea has the potential to change the whole thrust of teacher preparation curriculum. Maple explains:

> If teacher preparation programs maintain that the student teaching or practicum is where competencies are demonstrated, then the major emphasis of the teacher training program (coursework content) must be directed toward preparation of teachers to demonstrate those competencies. Expectations, standards, and accountability would then be built into the system both for students and for instructional personnel (pg. 312).

There is disagreement as to the effectiveness of competency-based teacher education, though. Just as completing coursework during teacher preparation programs does not ensure that teachers who complete the program will be effective, demonstrating minimum competencies during the student-teaching practica does not guarantee that teacher candidates will use these competencies in everyday classroom proceedings. Indeed, while competency-based training has its positive points, it is not a panacea for certifying teacher excellence (Lilly, 1979).

The category of teacher preparation to be explored in the next section of this paper is inservice education. Inservice education is the professional development of teachers so that students receive better instruction (Edelfelt, 1977). It evolves from compelling needs, such as the need to correct the weaknesses of undergraduate work, to enhance teaching competencies, and to look at possible instructional innovations (Cogan, 1975). Indeed, many context teachers come to inservice eager for new teaching ideas. They know that achievement in their courses depends to a large degree on their students' reading and reasoning skills (Stein, 1981).

Inservice and professional development programs have some important advantages over preservice educational programs. Participants are often very receptive to the experience, especially if the program is an outgrowth of their own expressed concerns, because students who determine their own curriculum needs are not as bored with school and learning (when) they see a sense of purpose and reason for learning these skills (Bereiter, 1979). The element of teacher input makes a crucial difference in how inservice programs and professional growth plans are received.

It is generally accepted that the use of professional growth plans has tremendous potential as a tool for managing teacher preparation and achieving teacher excellence (Maple, 1983). As already implied, though, there are certain considerations that must be observed in their implementation if these plans are to be successful. Especially important are organizational readiness and the inclusion of representatives from all involved factions in planning the program (Maher, in press).

If these conditions are met, the results of inservice education programs can be dynamic. In their article "Increasing Students' Reading Achievement Via Teacher Inservice Education," Millicent, Marr, Watkins, and Conley (1983) report: An ongoing, onsite, supervised inservice program providing regular diagnostic feedback to teachers doubled the reading comprehension gain scores of low SES Black intermediate grade students from a large urban district in a school year, as compared to the gains of students whose teachers did not have the inservice program (April, 1983).

The reasons for this particular inservice program's success can be largely credited to the combination of quality information presented and a wise design of program implementation. For instance, they

realized that one-shot inservice meetings often prove to be dismal failures and a waste of time (1983), so they followed up on the training sessions with regular, supervised inservice training and provided continual feedback to the teachers involved for a six-month timespan. They also made their inservice training sessions participatory or action-oriented so that teachers had frequent opportunities to raise questions, share ideas, and systematically review their performance (Millicent, Marr, Watkins, and Conley, 1983).

Obviously, they anticipated the need for lesson planning and decision-making devices to help teachers transfer their inservice experiences into the established routines of their classrooms. This also contributed to their success. In brief, the team worked hard to plan functional inservice meetings that helped teachers implement the newly acquired curriculum components (Millicent, Marr, Watkins and Conley, 1983).

Last, in a discussion of teaching excellence it is presumptuous to assume that formal teacher preparation programs -- whether preservice or inservice oriented -- make the only significant contributions to a teacher's expertise. For example, an area of inservice training that may not receive formal recognition, but that has the power to profoundly influence teacher performance, is the informal and mutual sharing of ideas and concerns about teaching among educational professionals. In a recent survey of 107 U.S. public school teachers ...results showed that most beginning teachers benefit from having at least one mentor, usually an older colleague (Fagan & Walter, 1982).

Factors such as internal motivation, creativity, adaptability, perceptiveness, the ability to take initiative, and the ability to critically analyze each student's strengths and weaknesses also influence a

teacher's performance in the classroom. To meet the needs of her/his students, a teacher must develop and apply these capacities to their fullest, since a student's success in learning to read is related to the degree that instructional procedures match the attention, processing and response styles of the learner (Ratekin, 1979).

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of each educational professional to continue the pursuit of teaching excellence. Paths leading to this end are many, and every teacher can choose whatever combination of formal preparation, informal mentoring, and independent exploration best suits her/him. Fortunctely, today's teachers are in an optimal position to do this. Not only are preservice and inservice programs generally available, but a wealth of new information on teaching strategies related to the very nature of learning is currently being published. Educators and researchers alike now recognize that what is needed is more knowledge of the mind, its nature and operation, and the forces that influence it (Russell, 1965). Today, as never before, the answers to this central question are being thoroughly explored. The work of such educational pioneers as Tony Buzan and Georgi Lozmov witness this.

In summary, the overall level of ability of teachers to teach reading has been found wanting. State requirements mandating coursework or inservice in reading need to be implemented and/or upgraded to help rectify the situation. Approaches to achieving this are in the offing, since effective workshops and numerous publications about the teaching of reading have been designed to promote instructional methods that compliment our learning patterns.

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B

# *Reading and the Deaf Child: A Review*

*Jacqueline T. Cruz*

*A paper presented at the Fourth Annual*
*Symposium on Reading Education*
*University of Guam*
*Mangilao, Guam 96913*
*November 9, 1983*

*Abstract*

*This review focuses on reading and the deaf child. It will identify some of the problems that deaf students encounter in learning to read. The literature is also examined to determine whether deaf children's mode of learning to read, follows the same pattern of learning as hearing children.*

*Reading and the Deaf Child: A Review*

*Studies conducted on reading achievement, on deaf subjects have been very alarming. On the average, deaf children are severely retarded in reading ability (Myklebust, 1964; Conrad, 1979). This review will attempt to identify the problem underlying failure in reading in deaf students. It will also point out, that despite their handicap, deaf students still employ the same learning process, as hearing students do, in learning to read.*

*Research studies on reading and the deaf child have clearly indicated that deaf students are very deficient, incompetent, and illiterate in this subject area. Focus on Reading: Project Update, cited a study by Di Francesca (1972), on congenitally, profoundly deaf children, and found that only 2 percent of this population could read competently. The remaining 98 percent were semi-literate or illiterate. Di Francesca (1972) also conducted a national survey and found that, for many deaf students, their reading scores leveled at about third and fourth grade level, at about 13 and 14 years and that there is very little change up to 19 years. Shroyer and Birch (1980) cited a study conducted by Wrightstone, Aronow, and Muskowitz (1963) that reported that the average reading achievement of 16 year old hearing impaired students was grade level 3.4. Of this group, 80 percent of the 16 year old students were below grade level 4.9 in reading. Focus on Reading: Project Update, also pointed out results of a study by Trybus and Karchmer (1977), on congenitally deaf children, indicated that a reading level beyond that of the nine*

year old hearing child was difficult in attaining. Conrad (1977) reported that only five of 355 deaf English school-leavers were able to read at grade level.

Deficiencies in language is a major contribution to failure in reading in dead students. Beatrice Ostern Hart (1978) in Teaching Reading to Deaf Children, believes that language is a prerequisite in reading. With hearing children, spoken language comes naturally, whereas with the deaf children, language must be taught. So, along with the task of learning to read, deaf children are also learning language. Liberman (1974) also stated belief that "congenitally, profoundly deaf children cannot read because they have not had the cumulative experience of hearing language" (p. 463). Quigley and Kretschmer (1982) further support inadequate language development as a possibility of failure in reading, and that "...learning to read often becomes a language-learning process at the same time." (p. 66). Hart points out that learning to read is a difficult task for "normal" children. It can be a frustrating and even impossible task for some. How much more for the deaf child, who must depend on visual cues in acquiring language skills. For the deaf child, language must be taught deliberately, with no assumptions made.

In the materials presently developed, a mastery of the English language is a prerequisite to learning to read. By the time normal hearing children start reading instruction, they will have mastered grammatical structure of English. Deaf children will still be struggling to learn every aspect of the English language, that is, "... sentence structure, common idiom, figurative language, as well as

vocabulary," (Harris, 1970, p. 27). This language handicap is a barrier for deaf children and is quite difficult to attain, much less master. "Reading is a dynamic psycholinguistic process (Goodman, 1972). As such, it relies upon the common bases of linguistic competence and performance constraints that also support and control other language processes..." (Kretschmer & Kretschmer, 1978, p. 282). "Too often a hearing-impaired child is said to have a reading problem, when in fact the problem is really language based." (Smith, 1975), (Kretschmer & Kretschmer, 1978, p. 282).

In the study, Free Recall by Deaf and Hearing Children: Semantic Clustering and Recall in Trained and Untrained Groups, (Liben, 1979), proved that deaf children employ similar strategies in categorizing as hearing children, despite language disadvantage. There were 120 children tested in this study, sixty deaf and 60 hearing children, drawn from grades three, five and seven, and aged nine, eleven, thirteen. Each child was tested individually. There were two groups, trained and untrained. There were two practice tasks. The first task was simple, two cards were placed in front of the child, pictures removed and the child was given an answer sheet (with two number spaces) and asked to write down what pictures were shown. The second practice task, there were six pictures and the answer sheet had six numbered spaces. The pictures were shown and then removed, and child was to recall on the answer sheet. Throughout the practice sessions, assistance in spelling and writing was given, as needed. In Trial one there were 16 pictures/16 numbered answer sheets. The students were given approximately one and a half to two minutes each,

to study the pictures, and unlimited time for recall (to write down the answers on the sheet). On the second trial, the trained group was given cues on categorizing and the untrained group were just given cards, then asked to recall items on answer sheet. The third trial, cues were given to both groups. This study found that deaf and hearing children begin to apply semantic clustering strategies spontaneously at about the same age. McGill-Franzen and Gormley (1980) conducted a study on comprehension of truncated passive sentences in relation to teaching the deaf complex syntax. Subjects were given sample sentences of truncated passives in isolation, (example: "The wolf was killed."), and prose passages from familiar fairy tales, (example: "Little Red Riding Hood."), and then asked to recall information. The authors cited conclusions by Power & Quigley (1973), Quigley, Smith, & Wilbur (1974) and Wilbur (1974), that suggested "deaf children acquire an understanding of complex aspects of syntax in approximately the same developmental sequence as hearing children but at a much slower rate." (p. 937). In their study McGill-Franzen & Gormley, (1980), 36 deaf students were randomly selected from a day-residential school. Task one materials were truncated passive sentences in isolation. Task two materials had six sentences from task one, but placed in two prose passages on familiar fairy tales. Subjects were tested individually. Results indicated a significant improvement in comprehension of truncated passives in context. Student performance in this study demonstrated that an understanding of syntax is linked by significance of the task rather than a function of some part of the subject, such as age or reading level. Syntax is

better understood by all deaf readers in prose context. "Since written text may in fact constitute the linguistic environment from which deaf children infer their notions about English grammatical usage, the more meaningful the context in terms of redundant information and familiarity to the subject, the more easily grammatical rules may be inferred." (McGill-Franzen & Gormley, 1980, p. 942).

In studies done by Friedman, Gillooley (1977), Truax & Edwards (1980), and Quinn (1981), orthography, in context, its structure and rules influence deaf children's ability to read, in the same manner as hearing children. Friedman & Gillooley's study on Perceptual Development in the Profoundly Deaf as Related to Early Reading, sought to determine whether the limited availability of a sound system affected perception letter sequences by the deaf. Acoustic cues are important elements in developing word attack skills of the young hearing reader. The study used 63 deaf (oral and non-oral) and 55 hearing subjects, matched in three grade levels of reading. First and second grade levels (representing earliest stages of learning to read) and fourth grade level (representing ceiling of reading skills for vast majority of deaf adolescents). They were also matched on basis of word-reading skills. Two sets of structured/unstructured stimuli were used. Both set A and B materials controlled for letter frequency. There was no significant difference between the two groups of deaf subjects and the hearing control group in the perception of letter sequences. This suggests that all subjects (deaf and hearing) are influenced by orthographic structure (Gibson, 1963, 1970). Quinn's (1981) study on Reading Skills of Hearing and Congenitally Deaf Children, examined the

deaf child's detection performance 1) within passages of various degrees of orthographic and syntactic context, and 2) with words that differ in pronouncability but that are equivalent in familiarity. Three types of passages were designed, according to procedure used to evaluate chunking strategies (Drenowski, 1978; Healy, 1976), normal prose, scrambled word and scrambled letters. One hundred and twenty six (126) normal hearing children were obtained from two private schools, ranging from seven to eleven years of age, in grades two to five. Deaf children were drawn from two schools, one using the oral approach and the other using Total Communication approach. Sixty eight (68) students were from oral sample and thirty eight (38) students from Total Communication sample. All subjects were tested in groups. Results showed evidence that deaf readers employ the same types of strategies as hearing readers. Both groups involve chunking at the whole-word level.

Too often the basal reader becomes the primary source of instruction, in the education of reading in both the hearing and deaf students. In a study conducted by Coley and Bockmiller (1980) on Teaching Reading to the Deaf, teachers of the deaf felt they had inadequate training in reading, and thus relied only on one approach in teaching reading, the basal reader.

Harris (1970), in The Relationship of Available Instructional Reading Materials to Deficiency in Reading Achievement, states that most of the reading materials, in the elementary level, are designed for hearing children. Most of these materials are determined by vocabulary control. They also required a mastery of the English language.

Studies by Hart & Liberman (1974) and Quigley & Kretschmer (1982) have indicated that deaf children are lacking in language. They have not mastered English syntax, common figurative language, and idiom. Basal readers pay little attention to these deficits. They are geared towards hearing children who have already acquired these skills naturally. Materials developed for beginning reading instruction with hearing children "...do not contain the language controls and the scope and sequence of skills necessary for the typical deaf child to develop independence in reading and language." (Hargis, 1970, p. 29).

Hart (1978), points out that a reading program for the deaf, as well with the hearing, "...should provide materials, experiences and activities for learning to read, as well as for reading to learn." (p. 9). The skills taught will be the same, but adapted to the needs and problems of the deaf child. Manson (1982) in Explorations in Language Arts for Preschoolers (Who Happen to be Deaf), pointed out a study by Smith (1978), stating "Hearing impaired students, as well as hearing students, can best be instructed in reading when the reading has meaning for them." (p. 39). Kretschmer and Kretschmer (1981) stated that, up to the present, there is no single reading series of kit that meets all the needs of the hearing-impaired readers. Manson (1982), Truax & Edwards (1980), and Kretschmer & Kretschmer (1981), all agree that teachers become the facilitators in this task of teaching reading. "The teacher's task is to evaluate the cognitive, communicative, and linguistic development of hearing-impaired students and

*then provide appropriate experiences where needed, and to choose, adapt, and develop materials and activities to meet these needs as a child learns to read." (Truax & Edwards, 1980, p. 367).*

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# *Teaching Reading in the Social Studies: A Review of Problem Areas Encountered*

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*Abstract*

*In reviewing recent research in teaching reading in the social studies, four problem areas stand out: (a) the reading skills needed for social studies achievement, (b) approaches to teaching reading in social studies, (c) the readability problems presented in social studies texts and, (d) approaches to teaching teachers how to teach reading in the social studies. This paper singles out each of the aforementioned problems, concerning reading in the social studies field.*

## Teaching Reading in the Social Studies: A Review of Problem Areas Encountered

Economic survival (Hoffman, 1980), expansion and diversification of social studies curriculum (Bullock and Hess, 1981), and drop out rate due to academic failure (Duscher, 1975) are some of the main concerns advocates of teaching reading in the social studies have. They all support a commonly accepted knowledge that reading ability and social studies achievement correlate. From filling out job application forms, reading instructions on manuals, taking a course in anthropology, geography, psychology, etc., to reading simple directions in class, reading is an important element of survival not only in the social studies class, but in other content classes and in the community as well.

With all this emphasis on teaching reading in content areas, i.e., social studies, there are still studies which show that reading in the content classroom is at a minimum. For instance, (Wolf and Greenwald, 1979) reported that only 10 percent of class time was devoted to conventional reading. They concluded that students were not reading in the content area classes as they should. Still another study (Freely, 1975) showed that teachers combatted the problem of students' inability to read through use of non-print material such as audio-visual aids and educational games, activities which do not help students increase their much needed reading skills. Although teaching reading in the social studies is an issue debated by social studies teachers themselves, as well as other content area teachers (Bullock and Hess, 1981), studies by Potter (1978) have shown that teachers are generally in agreement that it is a necessity. To do this, however, four major problem areas

must be addressed: (c) the reading skills needed for social studies achievement, (b) approaches to teaching reading in the social studies, (c) the readability problems presented in social studies texts and, (d) approaches to teaching teachers to teach reading in the social studies.

## Reading Skills for Social Studies Achievement

Lack of awareness of reading skills needed by students for learning the subject area is one reason why there is difficulty in getting content teachers to implement the many workable and valid methods of reading instruction in their areas (Hoffman, 1980). Two approaches to identifying social studies skills will be presented here: (a) the reading skills approach and, (b) the active reading behaviors approach.

The reading skills approach, advocated by Estes (1972), contends that a teacher can hardly be expected to teach content if that teacher is not aware of the reading skills needed for the mastery of that content. He promotes the following as valid predictors of success in the social studies: (1) reading vocabulary; (2) comprehension; (3) map reading; (4) use of references; (5) use of index; (6) use of the dictionary and (7) reading graphs, charts and tables.

Active reading behaviors approach, contrary to the above-mentioned reading skills (Bullock and Hess, 1981) point out the following active reading behaviors to be more sure indicators of reading comprehension. They are as follows: (1) paraphrasing; (2) summarizing; (3) predicting; (4) asking questions; (5) diagramming i.e., translating reading to visual patterns; (6) identification of unknown words and (7) the ability to change reading rates to suit material being read i.e.,

skimming, scanning, skipping, careful reading, etc. This approach facilitates direct observation of students' reading comprehension making it useful for teachers when determining student comprehension level of assigned content reading.

Research on the comparative effectiveness of the two approaches is not available.

Approaches to Teaching Reading in the Social Studies

Moore and Readance (1983) summarized four basic approaches to teaching reading in the content areas: (1) presenting isolated skills; (2) aiming; (3) guiding; and (4) presenting skills and content concurrently.

Presenting isolated skills emphasizes the process of learning but ignores the products. This approach is sometimes referred to as "direct." It involves a program of instruction focusing on specific skills necessary for successful reading of social studies materials, with little regard to the content (Herber, 1972). A study by Alvermann (1982) suggests a direct approach to written recall of main ideas from texts. This strategy involves teaching students to restructure the text organization of ideas to help in the recall of main ideas. The study involved two random groups - one experimental and one control. The experimental group of students were taught to reorganize their text prior to reading by using graphic organizers. Results of the study showed that graphic organizers helped the students restructure text organization, facilitating more written recall of main ideas. This is considered a direct approach because it focused primarily on the skill of recalling main ideas.

Other examples of this skills approach are: the critical reading approach (Storey, 1982) whereby, students were encouraged to read

fictional biographies and diaries for the purpose of judging their authenticity; the questioning approach (Van Jura, 1982) and the textbook survey approach (Duscher, 1975). All these examples concentrated on some skill the student was to learn and not necessarily the acquisition of some concept.

A more detailed approach is the following seven step approach to teaching social studies: (1) surveying textbooks, (2) vocabulary build-up, (3) skimming, (4) determining main ideas, (5) following directions, (6) sequencing of ideas and, (7) refinement of test-taking skills.

Aiming occurs when particular aspects of text material to be learned are directed to students. Purposes are set prior to reading and follow-up discussions take place to see if students met the purposes. Students are told what information to seek but not how to acquire or respond to them. The use of the newspaper in the classroom with proper teacher guidance tends to lean towards the aiming approach (Heitzmann, 1979). The teacher focuses on a reading purpose, the student reads the newspaper and usually there is ample discussion which follows the reading. Still another example of aiming is given by (Duscher, 1975) with his four step approach to helping poor readers to read. Pre-reading discussion is the first step, followed by the division of reading passages to even smaller places, the students then read the passage. The teacher sets the purpose and discussion follows. The weakness in this approach is that aiming students toward content only stresses the products of learning but, ignores the processes.

Guiding toward content is an enlightened form of aiming, the only difference is, the students are led to content and carefully helped to acquire teacher specified information. A strong example of this approach

*is in the use of pattern guides (Olson and Longnion, 1982). These pattern guides simply are study guides constructed by the teacher to help students with poor reading skills, focusing the students' attention on the reading/thinking processes required for comprehending the text. It also helps students identify and locate important concepts. All this is made possible because the student is guided step-by-step by the teacher through the required readings. A somewhat different approach, but still of the guiding nature is the use of taped readings. A study by Tyo (1980) proved that poor readers can make statistically significant gains when guided through the reading process by listening to taped readings as they read.*

*Presenting skill and content concurrently emphasizes the learning of skills alongside subject matter. A good example of this approach is the functional reading strategy (Vacca, 1975). This procedure allows classroom teachers to integrate skill instruction with content understanding. It presumes a "content-centered" approach. The teacher here is responsible for teaching the process of content acquisition as well as for influencing the acquisition of that content. To take this idea further, Cottsdanker-Willskens (1982), suggests the use of functional folders which make use of real world learning materials, i.e., international traffic signs, airline tickets, voting pamphlets, etc. The student is then required to read through these materials and answer teacher-made questions and vocabulary. The use of these folders is unlike the above strategy, in that, it takes away from the artificiality of text learning and uses what is real to enhance student reading ability. Although a strong move towards this type of approach exists, there is no research available to demonstrate which approach is best - emphasis on isolated skills, aiming, guiding or concurrent presentation of skills and content.*

*The Readability problems presented in Social Studies Texts*

*Within a typical social studies classroom there exists a wide range of reading levels among students (Dolain, 1975). To compound the problem, there also exists varying readability levels between and within social studies textbooks (Bullock & Hess, 1981 and Bradley & Ames, 1980).*

*Aukerman (1979) in his studies, related concept level of reading material to intellectual ability. With this in mind, the teacher must make every effort to match student reading ability to the reading level of the text or other materials. This involves a two-step process: (1) assess the students' reading level and; (2) assess the readability level of the text. To assess students' abilities one must simply refer to such methods as: the cloze procedure; an informal reading inventory; informal teacher observation and; the maze (a system very similar to the cloze) (Feely, 1975).*

*For the assessment of textbook readability, one must refer to such formulae as: the Frye Graph for Estimating Readability (Fry, 1974), the Informal Suitability Survey (Potter, 1978); the Diagnostic Survey (Dolgin, 1975); the Dale-Chall and Flesch formulae (Dolgin, 1975).*

*After following the above steps, (Feely, 1975) recommends that to best match reading ability to reading materials, the teacher should become familiar with the idea of grouping or rather, catagorizing textbook levels into three levels: independent (can be handled by the student without assistance), instructional (can be comprehended with teacher assistance) and frustration level (cannot be handled by the*

student at all and must be avoided). It is suggested that only independent reading and instructional reading levels be used at all times.

Teaching Teachers to Teach Reading in the Social Studies

Could it be that teachers are lacking the proper training for teaching reading in the social studies? Research reviewed for this paper seems to indicate that this may be so. Burgett (1980) suggests putting together inservice workshops as a means of giving teachers the proper training for the implementation of reading in the content areas, an approach best for those teachers who just cannot afford the time and money to go to school. Studies made in Pennsylvania (Askov, 1980) and in San Antonio (Diem, 1980) have shown that providing in-service workshops does indeed promote reading growth within the content areas.

More supportive studies like these still need to be made, in order that teaching reading in the social studies be strongly advocated as a means of promoting academic successes among students.

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# *Multi-Ethnic Teacher-Pupil Classroom Interaction*

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*Abstract*

*The studies show that teachers, whether Black or White, interact differently with Black students. The Black students receive more negative comments, regardless of placement in segregated or integrated classes. The same held true for Chicano and Eskimo-Indian teachers. In general, they reacted more favorably toward the White students. A study on Guam indicated that there was no difference, however, in the way Stateside White, Guamanian and Filipino teachers interacted with pupils.*

## *Multi-Ethnic Teacher-Pupil Classroom Interaction*

*While much research has been done on teacher-pupil interaction in a monocultural setting, relatively little research has been done on the ethnicity of teacher-pupil interaction. As a result of the Civil Rights Act, primarily Black and Mexican-American classroom settings have been studied. The main focus of concern was providing equal opportunity in education for these minority groups.*

*This paper will review teaching behaviors of Black, White and Mexican-American teachers and their interactions with students to other races in mainland United States. Also included is a review of a study done on Guam reporting the teacher-pupil interaction of Stateside White, Guamanian and Filipino teachers.*

### *Teacher-Student Interaction in a Desegregated Classroom*

*In a desegregated social studies classroom, Gay (1974) studied the verbal interactions of Black and White teachers, as directed to Black and White students. Data from Black teachers and White teachers were collected. Their interactions with Black and White pupils were recorded, using a Brophy and Good (1970) observation system. Verbal interactions were studied. Analysis of variance and correlational analyses were used to find statistical significance. Results indicated that regardless of the ethnicity of the teachers, Black students were treated negatively. Black students across grade levels received more negative feedback and Black high school students were asked multiple choice questions, and received more discipline contacts than Whites. White students across grade levels received more open contacts, received more positive feedback, were asked more process questions, and gave*

more correct responses. There was also a significant difference between Black and White teacher interactions with students. Black teachers, regardless of school level, asked more self-reference questions and made more positive behavioral contacts, while White teachers made less positive behavioral contacts and created more procedural contacts.

The conclusion in this study was that Black and White teachers do differentiate in their verbal behaviors with Black and White students in a desegregated social studies classroom, and that White pupils received more positive reinforcement and encouragement from teachers than did Black students.

Another study conducted in the Southwest (Jackson & Cosca, 1974) investigated verbal behaviors of teachers as directed to people of various ethnic groups. Data were collected in 494 classrooms in California, New Mexico and Texas in Grades 4, 8, 10 and 12. Flanders interaction coding system was used to code teacher-pupil interaction.

Twelve measures of interaction were used to detect disparities between teachers behaviors directed toward different ethnic groups of students. Twelve matched sample t-test and analysis of variance were employed to test statistical difference. It was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the amount of praise and encouragement given to Mexican-American and Anglo students. Both Anglo and Mexican-American teachers praised and encouraged Anglos 35 percent more than they did Chicanos, 40 percent of Anglos' ideas were used and accepted, and 21 percent more questions were directed to Anglos than to Mexican-Americans. This study concluded that teachers in the Southwest interacted differently toward Anglo and Mexican-American pupils. Findings in this study were similar to that of Gay (1974).

Cornbleth (1977) examined (a) differences in students' potential achievement according to teachers' perceptions, classroom, behaviors, and students' personal characteristics, i.e., race, sex; (b) differences in teacher-student interaction by race and sex; and (c) the relationship between teachers' perception of student potential achievement and classroom behavior.

Two groups of students, Blacks and Whites, in an urban integrated seconadry and an urban integrated middle school participated in the study. Black and White teachers were alo selected in both schools. Each school served an upper-power middle class community and had a balanced Black and White student population.

A five-point rating scale (1 = low, 5 = high) on the personal characteristics of students was used to rate students (e.g., outgoing, efficient, organized, reserved, and industrious). A modified Brophy and Good (1969) system of dyadic interaction analysis was employed to code teacher-student interaction. Teacher behavior, such as types of questions asked, nature of teacher feedback, and quality of student's responses, were observed and recorded.

Multivariate analysis of variance was employed to identify significant relationships between teacher-student interaction and ratings on teacher perceptions of pupils. Results of the analyses revealed significant relationships at the .01 level between teacher's perception and the race of the students. Teachers perceived Black and White students differently. White students were rated significantly higher by teachers than were Black students on class participation. Teacher directed more attention to White pupils than to Black pupils, thus producing more interchange of ideas between these pupils and teacher.

These results are consistent with that of Gay's (1974) in that "White students received more memory and convergent teacher questions, while Black students received more choice question; White students gave more correct responses, while Black students gave more incorrect responses; and White students initiated more work-related contacts with their teachers than did Black students" (Cornbleth).

Teacher-Student Interactions in Integrated Classrooms

In an integrated urban high school in Alaska, Kleinfeld (1972) found that most teachers were negative and hostile towards Indian and Eskimo students. The implication given in this study was that student race and ethnicity tend to affect teacher attitudes in terms of teacher-student interaction.

In contrast to the Kleinfeld study, Brown (1970) investigated praise-criticism ratio on an integrated classroom. Twelve teachers in an elementary school were involved in the study; three White teachers had Black students, and three Black teachers had White students. These six teachers were compared with teachers who had pupils of the same race and pupils of the same grade level. The results of this study indicated that there was significantly more praise and significantly less criticism in a classroom where teacher and pupils are not of the same race. This study also indicated that a positive situation exists which aids in students motivation when teacher's race differs from that of students. It was hypothesized that the use of praise yields significantly more pupil-initiated responses than criticism.

In an experimental study of micro-teaching, Rubonits and Maehr (1973) found that prospective elementary teachers criticized, ignored, and gave less attention to statements of Black students and directed

more attention and praise to White students. Although this study was not conducted in a natural setting and prospective teachers were used, it still implied that White teachers have a tendency to interact with Black students negatively.

Other studies which show negative interactions between white teachers and Black students are Datta, Schaefer and Davis (1968), and Leacock (1979). The Datta, Schaefer and Davis study showed that girls in the seventh grade were described more favorably than boys, and non-Black students were described more favorably than Blacks. Leacock's study "not only showed that Black students were rated generally less favorably than White students, but also that teachers showed particular hostility and rejection toward the brighter Black students."

Teacher Reinforcement of Students

Teacher behaviors do have an impact on student motivation and learning (Becker, et al., 1968), especially when teacher is positive and reinforcing, student achievement and success is most likely to occur. There have been several studies conducted that showed that positive teacher feedback or attitude is related to student achievement (Wright & Nuthall, 1970; Hughes, 1973; O'Leary & O'Leary, 1976). Students differing in achievement levels received different kinds of interactions with their teachers. High achieving students enjoyed more positive support from their teachers, while low achieving students experienced conflict and disapproval (Hoen, 1954).

According to Coble (1975), more encouragement and reward tend to be directed towards those pupils whom they regard as having "high ability" than towards those who they regard as having "lower ability." Coble found that even Black pupils who were classified as "high

ability" in an ethnically mixed classroom setting received no more praise or encouragement than Black pupils of low ability. Teacher held negative attitudes toward Black pupils no matter what ability level they are. While students within a mixed ethnic classroom setting received significantly more encouragement and praise, and scored significantly higher in tests of creativity than did "high ability" Black pupils, Coble concluded that this difference in creativity scores may have resulted from the differences in praise.

Different teachers exhibit different teaching behaviors. A study conducted by Friedman (1976) found that middle class students received a significantly greater amount of nonverbal reinforcement than lower class students. Lower class students receive more verbal reinforcement. Differences in reinforcement was also evident in this study. First grade students received more reinforcement than third grade students. It was concluded in this study that third grade teachers placed heavy emphasis on problem structuring, course work, lectures, and less emphasis with individual contact, resulting in less positive interaction between student and teacher.

Teacher's negative nonverbal behavior was also found to be more motivating for low and middle-socio-economic students than teachers' positive nonverbal behavior (Woolfolk, 1978). It was hypothesized that students of lower and middle socio-economic status received such a high degree of verbal assertiveness (comments, reprimands, etc.) from parents that when students received negative nonverbal cues from teachers, it had a significant effect on student's learning, in that the pupils complied more with teachers' request. This study confirms that "students worked harder for a negative adult than for a positive or neutral adult."

The Evertson and Brophy (1974) study found that there was a positive correlation between teacher criticism and student achievement for high socio-economic students only. These findings, and that of Woolfolk's (1978) findings, indicated that certain students on different socio-economic levels respond differently to different teacher interactions or behaviors. When a teacher criticized a pupil from a high socio-economic level, the pupils respond positively to the criticism. Conversely, pupils of low socio-economic background respond negatively to criticism.

In a study conducted by Klitzkie (1979), it was found that there was a statistically significant difference at the .05 level of confidence in the amount of positive verbal behaviors of three different ethnic origins of teachers (Guamanian, Stateside White and Filipino) directed to students of those same ethnic origin. Stateside White teachers tended to elicit more positive verbal comments to all students regardless of ethnicity. Guamanian teachers were next with Filipino teachers eliciting the least amount of positive verbal comments. There was no statistical significant difference in the amount of positive verbal behaviors between the ethnicity of the teacher and the ethnicity of the student.

In the negative verbal behavior, there was no significant difference at the .05 level in the amount of negative verbal behavior between the ethnicity of the teacher and the ethnicity of the student. Results of this study showed that Filipino teachers exhibited a high percentage of negative verbal statements followed by Guamanian teachers with Stateside teachers exhibiting the least amount of negative verbal comments.

Another finding was that there is a steady decline in the amount of positive verbal comments made by teachers of Grades I, 3, and 5. Positive comments recorded for Grades I were 367; Grade 3, 271; and Grade 5, 167. Though there were slight declines in negative verbal and neutral comments, they were not significant.

From the data collected in this study, it must be concluded that in this setting there was no significant difference in the way teachers directed selected verbal and nonverbal behavior toward pupils of different ethnic groups. The data showed a lower incidence of positive verbal comments on the part of Filipino teachers, but their behaviors were lower across all categories recorded.

In duscussing these conclusions and the way in which the results of this study differ from other studies which are similar, the following should be pointed out. The schools selected for study had a fairly equal balance of Guamanian, Stateside and Filipino students enrolled. The ethnic composition of the neighborhoods in which they live are also fairly equally distributed. Since Guam is a U. S. territory, there is a lot of pride in the fact that Guam is American, people have been living and working together for a long period of time, and a different attitude toward ethnic origin seems to prevail.

The socio-economic status of the people on the island is very similar. There is an absence of ghettos and similar social conditions that produce stigma. Socially, Guam is a very open culture. There is a freedom of social interaction which is not present in the settings where other research has been done.

It is suggested that this "melting pot" aspect of the culture played a part in the results that were obtained in this study.

The data from this study show that there are no significant differences in the way that Guamanian, Stateside, and Filipino teachers direct selected teaching behaviors to children of the same ethnic groups. The one difference shown by the data was that Filipino teachers do not direct as many positive comments to children. They are lowest in their directing of positive comments to Filipino pupils. This might be attributed to their training. The author is aware that most of the Guamanian and Stateside teachers have received behavioral oriented training. In the Philippines, the cultural pattern is to rely more on submission and negative control for discipline.

The data is different from Gay's (1974) study which showed that both Black and White teachers acted more negatively toward Black pupils. Jackson and Cosca (1974) found similar patterns in teachers' reactions to Chicano pupils. As teachers were asked to select pupils whom they considered to be "average" for this study, there is no way of knowing if they provide more positive feedback to higher performing children, as found by Coble (1975).

Two findings seem to carry an implication for improving education on Guam. The finding that Filipino teachers use fewer positive verbal comments indicates a need to provide inservice training in positive behavioral techniques. Included in this training could be material to create an awareness of the cultural difference and encourage use of techniques which have proven to be more effective in western education.

A second implication is that teachers at the upper grade levels should use more positive approaches. The steady and rapid decline of positive comments from first to fifth grade may have serious implications

for pupil motivation and achievement. Research to investigate achievement under conditions of high and low reinforcement schedules should be undertaken.

## Summary

The studies which have been reviewed show that there are differences in the way teachers behave towards pupils. The general trend in these studies was that teachers tend to react negatively toward pupils of different ethnic groups. In general, the studies don on mainland United States report a higher degree of interaction on the part of White teachers with less interaction by Black and Chicano teachers. Pupils of Caucasian origin receive more of the positive verbal behavior which should tend to improve performance. At the same time, Chicano and Black pupils receive more negative attention, which would seem to supress performance.

A report of a study done on Guam indicated that there were no significant differences among Stateside White, Guamanian and Filipino teachers in the way they interact with students of varying ethnic origins. The study did show, however, that there was a decline from primary to grade five in the amount of positive verbal comments made by all teachers, regardless of pupil or teacher origin.

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E

# *Promotion-Retention and their Effects on Reading Achievement*

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*Abstract*

*The educational literature collected discusses promotion or retention and conclusions drawn from each study. Although there is some disagreement, there is more support for promotion and less for retention.*

## Promotion-Retention and their Effects on Reading Achievement

What are the effects of promotion, that is, advancing a child periodically to a higher level of instruction? What are the benefits of retention - the practice of requiring a student who has been in a given grade level for a full school year to remain at that level for another year? What are the effects of these policies on reading achievement?

### Review of the Literature

Jackson (1975) did a systematic review of research literature on the effects of grade retention. The purpose of this review was to determine whether students who are doing poor academically or who show emotional and social maladjustment in school will benefit more from being retained or promoted. Journal articles which referred to the effects of grade retention were collected from The Library of Congress, The National Education Association Library and The George Washington University Library in Washington, D.C. Only 44 studies were selected as original research and were reviewed intensively in Jackson's study. He placed the studies into three designs. The first compared students retained with students promoted. The second compared the results of retained students before and after retention. The third design was an experimental one where low achievers were assigned to repeat a grade or be promoted and then compared with each other.

The results in this study showed that there was a need for further research or higher quality research than those done in the past. In some designs, retention had possible real benefits, but promotion had even greater benefits. There was no reliable evidence indicating that retention is beneficial to students with serious academic or adjustment problems.

The study concludes that all the research evidence that has been collected is so poor that valid conclusions of the benefits of promotion or retention cannot be made.

Studies Favoring Promotion

Grade retention does not guarantee greater achievement. The majority of the students who repeat a grade achieve no better the second time, and many do worse. It only worsens personal and social adjustment problems. The threat of non-promotion does not increase motivation. Research studies have been collected to support social promotion instead of retention. (Thompson 1980)

Thompson (1980) discusses a study conducted by Dobbs and Neville (1967). The authors followed the achievement gains of sixty first graders from eight low socioeconomic, urban schools for two years. Half of the children were retained and the other half were promoted to second grade. The children were matched according to their age, race, sex, socioeconomic status, type of classroom assignment, mental ability, and reading achievement at the end of the first year of school. Most of the students were slow learners.

The study concluded that the promoted students made significantly greater gains in reading achievement each year of the study and significantly greater gains in arithmetic over the two-year period. The authors concluded that retention may be not only ineffective but harmful to achievement.

Hall and Demarest (1958) did a study of fourth and sixth grade students in the Phoenix School District Number 1 over a period of ten years. The purpose of the study was to find out what effect promotion policy had on pupil's achievement in reading. In 1948, Phoenix School District Number 1 changed from the grade-standard policy to a combined

continuous-promotion and continuous-progress policy. The Iowa Every Pupil Achievement Test and The Kuhlmann-Anderson Group Intelligence Test were administered to every fourth and sixth grader from 1946-1956. Records of these scores were compared to prove their findings.

The data collected showed that there was no difference in the average reading grades and average intelligence quotients over a period of ten years, during which a change in promotion policy was made. There was also no differences in the scores of any one school over this period. Neither ability nor reading level of the fourth graders had changed over the ten year period. Even with the lowering of the chronological ages over the period, the reading grades did not change significantly. This study supports other research on the idea that regular promotion of children, keeping children with their own age group, does not result in a lowering of academic achievement.

Chansky (1964) studied low achieving first graders in four school districts in Ulster County, New York. The purpose of the study was to determine if mental age and/or personality adjustment can predict achievement in reading and arithmetic. Tests were given to low achieving first graders to measure intelligence, academic achievement, and personal and social adjustment in the last month of first grade. Before the testing was done, though, the teachers and principal had decided which students would be promoted and which would be retained.

The findings showed that the promoted children were better achievers than the retained ones. They also had a higher mental age. There was no difference in personal and social adjustment between the groups. Both had maladjusted scores. Tests were given, again, in the seventh month of the school year. There was no change in intelligence. Both groups improved in vocabulary, reading comprehension, arithmetic

reasoning and arithmetic fundamentals. The promoted group made more improvement in vocabulary and in reading comprehension. There was no difference in improvement in arithmetic. In terms of ability, the promoted children were underachieving much more than the retained students. There were no great losses observed in personality adjustment for either groups. At the end of the study, both groups were still considered maladjusted. The retained group being less so. A decrease in academic or personality adjustment was not observed in both groups.

Kowitz and Armstrong (1961) did a comparative study on two school districts that had different promotional policies. The purpose of the study was to compare achievement of pupils in a school were non-promotion was used as a device to insure achievement with achievements of pupils in schools that did not use non-promotion as its device. Records of the schools were taken from The Research Offices of the New York State Education Department and compared.

The findings showed that in the school where non-promotion was used to encourage achievement, there was a higher rate of failure compared to the other school. The "achieve or fail" policy caused increased achievement in the students who were in no danger of being retained but little or no change for those who were retained. These children who were in no real danger of retention may have been pressured towards over-achievement. It can be concluded that the school policy does make a difference on academic achievement.

Boesel (1960) conducted a study on two groups of forty-three low achieving children each, in the public schools of Toledo, Ohio. The study was done to find out about the possible effects of promotion and non-promotion on reading achievement and on behavior-problem tendencies at the first grade level in school. One group had been promoted, the

other had not been promoted. The groups were matched by pairs on the basis of sex, age, and I.Q. and separate subgroups were set up. The reading progress and behavioral adjustments of these groups were followed through the three years of the primary period through periodic reading tests and behavior ratings. Information from kindergarten and health records, growth measurements, personal interviews helped aid in the study.

Results indicated that repeating first grade increased already existing differences between promoted and non-promoted groups in both reading and behavior. The following year, however, there were hardly any differences in reading and behavior. During the two years of study, problem-behavior tendencies increased under regular promotion than under delayed promotions. Attitudes toward school and reading were the same in both groups. Popularity and social confidence were not affected by non-promotion. The implication for education procedures seems to be that promotion or non-promotion makes little difference with the progress pupils make.

Some Support for Retention

But the evidence has not been uniform. Some studies have found retention to hold a beneficial effect.

Scott and Ames (1969) did a study on twenty-seven elementary school children from Cheshire, Connecticut. The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of repeating a grade because of immaturity, alone. The immaturity of each child was determined by behavior examinations and teacher and principal's judgment. Children's final grades (before they repeated) were compared to mid-year grades (the repeat year). Teachers were asked to fill out a questionnaire on each pupil's attitudes and progress during the repeat year. Parents were

also asked to fill out a questionnaire on their child's attitudes toward school during the repeat year as compared with their attitudes the preceding year.

The findings indicated that the children received higher scores after repeating than they had the previous year. The teacher's queestionnaire showed that children's attitudes and progress were much better during the repeat year. The results of parent's questionnaire showed that retention improved general attitude toward school, attitude toward schoolwork, ability to finish written work, getting along with schoolmates, lessening of fatique, getting ready for school in the morning, and a sense of responsibility. For the study on this selected group, repeating did have good effects on school grades, children's school behavior and on home behavior.

Thompson's (1980) review of literature discusses a study done by Finlayson (1977) who questions the belief that retention causes low self-concept. He did a two-year study on first graders from two suburban districts near Philadelphia. Finlayson compared the self-concepts of seventy-five regularly promoted students, retained students, and promoted borderline students who showed the same characteristics as the retained ones.

Finlayson found that retention did not create self-concept problems. The self-concept scores for all three groups rose during the first year. The self-concept scores of the retained students continued to increase during the second year while the promoted and borderline students showed slight drops in their scores. These scores were still higher than retained students. The increasing self-concept scores of the retained students were matched by the judgments of parents and teachers, who felt that retention was beneficial for the students.

## Conclusion

There is a need for further research of a much higher quality than that conducted in the past.

It is possible for grade retention to have some real benefits for retained students but for grade promotion to have even greater benefits.

Jackson (1975) states that "these educators who retain pupils in a grade do so without valid research evidence to indicate that such treatment will provide greater benefits to students with academic or adjustment difficulties than will promotion to the next grade."

The best promotion policy is one that calls for social promotion as the rule and permits a possible retention when it is in the child's best interest. (Thompson 1980) Some research suggest that retention benefits immature students, especially in the very early grades. But when schools are in doubt, they should promote rather than retain.

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F

# *Use and Effectiveness of Paraprofessionals: A Review*

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*Abstract*

*A review of studies of the past twenty-five years on paraprofessionals. Covers roles, training, materials and comparisons with teachers. Data-based studies cited show that paraprofessionals can be as effective as teachers if they are properly trained.*

*The Use and Effectiveness of Paraprofessionals*

*Paraprofessionals have been an accepted part of the educational scene now for many years. They have served in numerous capacities. The slowly mounting evidence of their effectiveness will surely contribute to their retention and expanding roles for many years to come.*

*This review was selected to show three aspects of use of paraprofessionals: 1) roles and training, 2) appropriate materials for their use, and 3) effectiveness as reported in data-based studies.*

*The use of non-certified persons in classrooms is not a new phenomenon. Parents and others have assisted as volunteers for many years. Headstart and other compensatory programs established by P.L. 89-10 in 1957 were the first to begin systematically to use paraprofessionals on a paid basis. These non-certified persons have been utilized in many ways in order to give the teacher more time to plan and teach. The literature shows that they have served as clerks and monitors in the office, library, cafeteria and playground. Additionally, they have been audio-visual aides and classroom helpers (Egland, 1966; Pino, 1966; Andres & Evans, 1968; Peryon, 1974). The National Education Association (1967, 1968, 1969) and Gordon (1971) reported that most of the tasks required of paraprofessionals were non-instructional, such as helping children with winter clothing, collecting lunch money, escorting children to separate classes, etc. Other studies indicated that the presence of paraprofessionals had a positive effect on the achievement and attitudes of pupils, (Brighton, 1971; IED, 1971). However, no data were available.*

*As more paraprofessionals were employed by the schools, their roles began to change. With paraprofessionals placed in the classrooms,*

teachers began using them in instructionally-related tasks. Reports by Emerling and Kanawa (1966), Hornburger (1969), Erb (1972) and Ryan and Peryon (1974), described the duties of paraprofessionals to include tutoring, small group drills and teaching structured lessons. But in order to provide this kind of support for the teacher, these same reports concluded that it was necessary to train paraprofessionals at both the preservice and inservice levels.

In a descriptive analysis of case studies on 15 demonstration projects involving aides in the schools, Bowman (1970) reported that the data support the need for training professionals in skills related not only to non-instructional duties, but also to instructional activities that can be done with the supervision of the teacher.

Studies have also shown that without appropriate training, paraprofessionals will make errors in delivering instruction (Lippitt, 1965; Niedermeyer, 1969; Gang, 1977), and that children will not show gains in achievement (Niedermeyer & Ellis, 1970).

Esbensen (1966) in a report on the use of paraprofessionals in remedial education, wrote that "properly trained paraprofessionals should be able to perform limited instructional tasks under the general supervision of the classroom teacher" (p. 237). His report indicates further that, although the "teachers' role is to make decisions regarding the goals of instruction, there is no reason why these goals could not be met by the use of a trained paraprofessional" (p. 239).

In a national survey of special education classrooms conducted by Blessing (1967), it was reported that paraprofessionals were being used to provide direct instruction under the supervision of the teacher. He concluded that, with proper training, a paraprofessional's function could be developed well beyond that of clerical aide.

Fredericks (1975) reported on the training and use of paraprofessionals in working with severely handicapped children. His conclusions were that paraprofessionals can be used effectively if: (1) they are trained, and (2) their teaching tasks are commensurate with their level of training (p. 2).

Gilson (1975) has trained over 1,500 paraprofessionals to serve in remedial education settings under Title I (ESEA). After more than ten years research in training paraprofessionals, he states:

> Aides with less than high school education can be trained to tutor effectively after 9 to 15 hours of group instruction supplemented by ongoing supervision (p. 2).

The need for training paraprofessionals in special education is summed up by Hofmeister (1976):

> Just giving a child a chance to interact with an untrained paraprofessional may have some sort of short term payoff, because of the advantage to that child of receiving individual attention. To achieve long term changes, the tutor needs systematic training and direction (p. 216).

## Appropriate Materials

In recent years there has been a drive to develop field-tested programmed materials. One characteristic of these materials is that they are designed to teach a specific skill or a group of related skills. They are sequenced from simple to complex tasks. They also have been tested to determine if they do in fact teach their objectives. Another important characteristic is that they contain very specific instructions for the tutor.

Programmed tutorial materials are described by Thiagarajan (1975) as having the following characteristics: They are systematically structured and sequenced with explicit instructions, they are designed for one-to-one teaching; and are designed to be used by a paraprofessional without the need for making complex decisions. Similar descriptions of programmed, self-contained tutoring materials, have also been related by Kapfer and Kapfer (1972), Ellson (1975), and Fredericks (1975). Harrison (1975) summarizes the characteristics needed for effective paraprofessional materials, that is they should be arranged in hierarchical sequence aimed at specific learner needs and provide for appropriate examples, practice and review.

Research has shown that self-contained programmed materials such as those described in the above reports, have been effective in increasing the skills of mildly and severely handicapped children (Hofmeister & Latham, 1972; Hofmeister & Reavis, 1974). Lent (1975), in his work with Project MORE, developing materials for teaching the retarded, states the need for such materials as follows:

> Skill training with the retarded requires a one-to-one, or at most, small group teaching process. Since everyone knows that we can never train enough teachers well enough, nor in sufficient numbers, it must follow that many instructional programs must be created to enable extraordinary performance from ordinary individuals (p. 1).

Studies concerned with programmed tutoring by paraprofessionals have been conducted by Ellson and his associates (Ellson, Barber, Engle & Kampwerth, 1967; Ellson 1968; Ellson, 1969). Elson's (1975)

conclusions relative to the effectiveness of programmed tutoring were that, when comparing tutored with untutored groups, large gains have consistently been achieved in reading by tutored groups using programmed materials.

> It has reduced the proportion of non-readers in a sample of disadvantaged children from approximately 10% to less than 1%, and it has reduced the proportion of first grade failures, i.e., retentions, by as much as 66%, and assignments to special education classes by as much as 75% (p. 3).

Effectiveness of Paraprofessionals

In reviewing the literature of the past 30 years, only four studies were reported that dealt directly with the comparison of effectiveness of teachers and paraprofessionals.

The Supplementary Teaching Assistance in Reading Project (STAR) (Tannenbaum, 1968) compared gains in achievement made by children taught by clinic specialists and those taught by trained paraprofessionals working in homes in a ghetto neighborhood. Subjects were first graders who had been referred as being at risk of retention in first grade. There were 490 children randomly assigned to STAR, 96 to a reading clinic, and 79 to a control group which received no treatment. The clinic students were taught for 45 minutes per day for 5 months. The STAR children were served by paid aides who visited the homes once a week for 5 months also. The aide (paraprofessional) taught a highly structured lesson in reading readiness. The content of the lessons were letter names and sounds, phonics, formal language experience, and visual perception activities. A copy of the lesson was left with

the parents. Some of the parents repeated the lesson during the week. Each week the aides reviewed the child's progress with the parents.

Pre- and posttest data were gathered using the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test and the Frostig Test of Visual Perception and the New York Readiness Test. Intergroup comparisons made using mean differences, favored the STAR group on every criterion measure. On national norms, the STAR pupils scored at the 66 percentile, while the clinic and control pupils scored at the 48 and 41 percentile, respectively.

Tannenbaum (1968) concluded that:

> The study shows that nonprofessionals, especially those representing a disadvantaged population, can learn some teaching skills traditionally reserved for professional teachers and utilize them with success in a disadvantaged community (p. 445).

Popham (1971) developed performance tests of teaching proficiency that were intended to "discriminate between experienced, credentialed teachers and non-teachers ("people off the street") with respect to their ability to accomplish pre-specified instructional objectives" (p. 109).

Tests in auto mechanics, electronics and social science were developed. Each test involved content that was not currently taught during the school year. The tests required no specific entry skills. The teachers in the three subject areas were experienced volunteers in the San Diego and Orange County schools. Auto mechanics and electronics "non-teachers" were recruited through newspaper advertisements. Social science non-teachers were volunteer college students

who had completed two years of college with a major or minor in social science. In the study there were 28 pairs (teacher and non-teacher) for auto mechanics, 16 pairs for electronics, and 13 pairs for social science.

Each teacher and non-teacher was given a set of objectives with resource materials and told to devise activities to teach to the objectives. In other words, only the ends were specified, the means were left up to the instructor.

Each teacher and non-teacher taught their respective students for one hour a day for a two-week period. The students were pre- and posttested by the researchers on the first and last day. A questionnaire was given to the students following the posttest to determine their attitudes regarding the instructional unit. The data were analyzed using the class means. Comparisons were made between teachers and non-teacher groups for each subject. Correlated t-test analyses on gross posttest scores resulted in no significant differences for all three groups.

The responses to the questionnaire were analyzed by analysis of variance tests of the differences between the affective reactions of students in the two groups for each subject area. The results again showed no significant differences in the reactions of the students to either group, teachers or non-teachers.

Popham's (1971) conclusion was that "in three separate instances teachers were not able to perform better than non-teachers in their ability to promote learner attainment of prespecified instructional objectives" (p. 116).

Shortinghuis and Frohman (1974) reported on the Portage Project, which served handicapped preschool children in rural Wisconsin. They compared teachers and paraprofessionals in a home teaching situation. They set out to show that with careful preservice and continued inservice training, the paraprofessionals could be as effective as home teachers. The personnel, called "home teachers" in the project, were three professional teachers and four paraprofessionals. The subjects were 37 children whose average age was 48 months. They were served by the home teachers.

A highly structured precision teaching model was used, along with training in behavior modification techniques. The entire staff, teachers and paraprofessionals, met one-half day each week for inservice training. The paraprofessionals met an extra half-day with a project coordinator to review and write prescriptions and discuss problems. Each home teacher visited a family once a week for one and one-half hours to demonstrate lessons to the parents, record progress of the children, and set up new goals with the parents, who then continue teaching the child during the week.

The children were pre-tested in September and posttested in May on the communication and academic subtests of the Allpern-Boll Developmental Skills Inventory. Gains made in months were the dependent variables.

Analysis of variance was used to compare the gains made by children taught by each group. The results for the communication subtest showed that though the mean gains for the children taught by the teachers was 10.3 months, and for the children taught by the paraprofessionals was 15.1 months, the differences were not significant. Analysis

of variance for the academic subtests did show a significant difference in favor of the paraprofessionals. The scores showed 11.0 months mean gain for the children taught by the teachers and 17.7 months mean gain for the children taught by the paraprofessionals.

The investigators concluded that paraprofessionals could successfully serve as home teachers of handicapped children after intensive training in data-based prescriptive teaching programs (Shortinghuis & Frohman, 1974).

The fourth and last data-based study was a tutorial project by Peryon (1980) in which teachers were compared with paraprofessionals, not only on pupil achievement outcomes, but also on the actual teaching behaviors within the process of tutoring a kindergarten child. The study was a clinic-laboratory type study. Internal validity was the chief concern.

Three qualified elementary teachers and three housewives (called paraprofessionals) with no training in education were selected when they enrolled for a tutoring course. None of the teachers nor paraprofessionals had any training in the use of structured teaching materials. Each group was subsequently trained separately in the use of these materials. Training required 22 hours for each group. The pupil subjects of the study were the first six kindergarten children to be enrolled by their parents in a Kindergarten Reading Project. Each teacher and paraprofessional was assigned to tutor one child for 20 minutes, three times a week for eight weeks in a small room. Children were pre- and posttested on three norm-referenced tests and one criterion referenced test.

While the tutoring sessions were being conducted, each tutor was unobstrusively observed by a trained observer for ten minutes of each lesson, through one-way glass. Data were collected on the frequency of four verbal behaviors that are considered critical to effective teaching (Morsch & Wilder, 1954; Engelman, 1969; Hofmeister, 1976; Haring & Bateman, 1977). The specific behaviors were "demonstrating," "practicing," "testing" and "reinforcing." A fifth category "off-task" was included to account for irrelevant behaviors.

Two kinds of data were collected: (1) the frequency data on teaching behaviors, and (2) the pre-posttest data of the pupils on three norm-referenced tests and one criterion-referenced test.

In order to facilitate the analysis of the large amounts of teaching behavior data, the frequencies of each behavior for each tutor were blocked into four groups of six lessons each. The means were then computed. The chi square test was used for significance. Analysis of these data resulted in no significant difference on all the five behaviors.

Comparisons of the pupil gain scores on the four tests were made using the t-test for independent sample means. Results indicated no significant differences between children taught by the teachers and those taught by the paraprofessionals on any of the tests.

The data from this study compare favorably with the few other data-based reports in the literature. Popham (1971) found no differences in the achievement of high school students taught by teachers and "non-teachers." Tannenbaum (1968) and Shortinghuis and Frohman (1974) found no differences in achievement of preschoolers taught by home teachers who were certified teachers and paraprofessionals. The

Peryon study differed from those cited in that the tutors were trained specifically to perform the behaviors involved in the use of a carefully sequenced instructional package in reading. In addition to comparing the pupil achievement outcomes, the study also compared the behaviors within the instructional process. It was found that not only were the pupil outcomes similar, but the teaching behaviors exhibited were also similar, for the teachers and the paraprofessionals.

In conclusion, there appears to be a consensus in the literature that paraprofessionals are a valued part of the educational process. They are viewed not merely as another "warm body" in the classroom, but as people who provide instruction for children who have difficulties in academic subjects. The need for training paraprofessionals is evident from a number of reports.

In the relatively few comparative studies of teachers and paraprofessionals, it was found that trained paraprofessionals can achieve similar academic gains with children.

## Implications

The implications derived from the results obtained in these studies are made for, (1) the use of paraprofessionals, and (2) teacher training. These reports suggest that more use should be made of trained paraprofessionals. Individualization of instruction is a heavy load for the classroom teacher, despite the mandates of the laws regarding education of the handicapped (P.L. 94-142, 1975). By using paraprofessionals, the ratio of pupils to instructional personnel can be reduced, thereby providing more assistance for children who need help.

With the mounting evidence (Ellson, Harris & Barber, 1968; Tannenbaum, 1968; Ellson, 1969; Kapfer & Kapfer, 1972; Shortinghuis

& Frohman, 1974; Fredericks, 1975; Harrison, 1975; Hofmeister, 1975; Lent, 1975; Thiagarajan, 1975) on the effectiveness of systematically developed materials in the basic skills, it would seem that training in the use of these materials should be a required part of general teacher training. By being equipped to select and use these kinds of materials, the teacher is better able to provide for the varying abilities of the students with whom she is entrusted. Further, s/he is in a better position to delegate some of the teaching responsibilities to other persons whom s/he trains. This will allow the teacher to be more effective in carrying out his/her primary mission of planning instruction and evaluating learning.

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# A Question of Readiness:
# When Should Your Child Begin School?

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*Abstract*

*It is the intent of this paper to present for your consideration the ideas and research of a growing number of educators and child psychologists concerning the question of readiness. This manuscript will present traditional views of readiness together with emerging contemporary views. Further, it will present a viable alternative to the early schooling approach. Also, implications for educators of the very young will be discussed.*

*A Question of Readiness:*

*When Should Your Child Begin School?*

*"The idea that the 'earlier a child starts school the better' is well on the way to becoming an unquestioned tenet of the conventional wisdom (Moore and Moore, 1972)." It is becoming increasingly important to excel in many areas at earlier ages. "Societal pressures for increased academic achievement of children in elementary school has resulted in the earlier introduction of formal reading instruction in first grade and a highly academic orientation to reading readiness programs in kindergarten (Hoffman and Filmer, 1979)."*

*Across the country a call for earlier schooling for all children is being made by educators and legislatures alike. Public supported education beginning with four-year-olds has been called for and it has been recommended by New York State Regents that schooling be available for three-year-olds. In 1976, the American Federation of Teachers proposed a 40-billion dollar network of free nursery schools for 3 - 5 year olds. Classes would run as long as 11 hours a day and up to 320 days a year (U.S. News & World Report, 1976).*

*Amidst this furious rush to the schoolhouse, there is still another voice to be heard. There are those who make a sound argument against early schooling. Proponents of delayed formal schooling, who suggest delay from eight years of age, espouse the view that the home - not the school - can do more for children at the critical ages between birth to seven or eight. Urie Bronfenbrenner, a human-development professor at Cornell University warns: "When teachers start acting like they know how to raise the very young better than their parents, I say -- 'Look out, America.' Nothing can take the place of a caring family,*

rich or poor. Schools, on the other hand have shown how thoroughly they can demoralize and confuse children, even in their later years (U.S. News & World Report, 1976)."

Advocates of delayed schooling cite the failure of readiness programs like Head Start to produce scholastic achievement, and they project the impressive body of research which indicates the late starter generally does better in school than does the early starter.

The debate concerning the age of readiness is one which raises many issues including that of the goals of education at each level, but the primary issue is that of physiological, psychological, and emotional readiness. Readiness usually refers to readiness for regular public school - kindergarten or first grade. As it is generally accepted that formal education should begin between four and a half to six years of age, most states or counties have decreed or put into law that children begin school "no earlier than" and "no later than" stipulated ages. This decree makes it easy for governing agencies as it liberates them from dealing with individual cases. However, this "convenience" is directly contrary to the unwritten law of readiness. Loosely worded, this law may be stated as: The age of readiness - as does the age of first teeth, potty training, walking or puberty - varies for each child.

A Department of Health, Education and Welfare publication, Your Child From One to Six, coordinated by Dr. Richard Granger provides guidance as to areas of maturity to be considered in determining an individual child's readiness. These insightful guidelines follow as they provide a backdrop for much of what will follow.

1. Physically the child must be healthy and strong enough to enjoy the challenge of going to school and to bear up under the strains and stresses involved.

2. The child must be capable of separating from the parent and spending a number of hours each day in a place that is unfamiliar with adults and children who are largely unknown at first.

3. In most schools the child must be able to obey directions even when not watched every minute.

4. The child must have a long enough attention to be able to sit still for fairly long periods and concentrate on one thing at a time, gradually learning to enjoy the practicing and problem solving activity involved.

5. The child must be able to tolerate the frustration of not getting immediate attention from the teacher or others and to wait and take turns.

6. The child must have some of the basic hand-eye skills necessary to the learning of reading and writing. These include skills such as handling a pencil, turning pages, recognizing shapes and colors, and so forth.

In suggesting that a parent not push his child into school at the earliest possible school-allowed age, Dr. R. Granger - a pediatrician at the Child Study Center, Yale University - urges, "That amount of extra time between the start of one school year and the next may be the time your child needs to get it all together - to integrate physical, psychological and social skills to the point where entering school becomes exciting instead of frightening."

Interestingly, the laws which stipulate age entrance apply both to boys and girls. Research on maturity levels of boys and girls of the same age indicate that girls generally mature almost a year earlier than boys. Statistics bear out that there is a higher percentage of male remedial readers than there are female remedial readers. When we consider that a boy and a girl of the same age begin the first grade together with the boy being a full year behind maturity-wise, there is little wonder that there are more boys with learning deficiencies. Similarly, Dr. Raymond Moore, publisher of Hewitt Research Foundation

materials, published a set of Hewitt figures that "show boys are 3 to 1 more often learning disabled, 3 to 1 delinquent and 4 to 1 acutely hyperactive."

At this point, we will examine in detail support for the arguments for and against early schooling.

Proponents of early schooling base their arguments on two well-proven points. First, there is incredibly rapid growth in a child's intelligence between birth and age five. Secondly, it is essential for a child's social development to keep pace with his intellectual maturity. Proponents feel these two areas can more efficiently be accomplished in the school setting. Early schooling advocates make two assumptions then which are not so well founded. Namely, they assume that by organizing a child's intelligence we are nurturing it and that brightness equates to readiness. Harvard sociologist Burton L. White who helped organize Boston's Brookline Early Education Project says children start developing their learning capacity at birth. "By the age of three," he says, "it's pretty much over (U.S. News & World Report, 1976)." Following this line of thought, one would need to enroll one's child in school soon following the trip home from the hospital. The research refutes the latter two assumptions as well respected psychologists and pioneer child researchers such as Piaget and Maslow establish a different condition for organizing intelligence and making it meaningful. These pioneer researchers suggest that in the formative years, children need an environment free of tasks that will overtask their brains. Further, they need an environment which supplies warmth, freedom, acceptance, continuity and security. Traditional school experiences, apparently, provide anything but the above as children are often thrust into this

new setting having been instructed to fend for themselves. Unaccustomed to the rigorous routine of the classroom, the pressure and conflict with peers, the lack of individual attention from the adult in charge - the child many times feels anything but secure and loved.

The foremost argument for delayed school entrance comes from the research, Moore and Moore (1972) reported several studies on this subject. Three of these studies, in brief form, follow.

1. In Chula Vista, California, Margaret Gott compared kindergarten children who were about four years, nine months of age when enrolled with those who were about five years, seven months. She found that, after six grades of schooling, the younger group achieved less well than the older group in all subjects at each grade level (except in one case where achievement was equal).

2. In Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Inez King reported in 1952 that 54 children who were under age six when they started formal school were compared with 50 children who started after age six. Stanford Achievement Tests at the end of grade six showed a distinct difference, strongly in favor of the older group.

3. In Grosse Pointe, Michigan, Paul Mawhinney describes a study of children who were selected by psychologists because they were considered mature enough or bright enough to be admitted to kindergarten before age five. An evaluation of the children in the program over a 12 year period showed that one-fourth of the selected group were below average or had repeated a grade.

The research studies cited strongly support the conclusion that children whose parents have opted to delay their school entrance quickly catch up and even pass those begun at mandatory school ages or at earlier ages. It may be generalized that during the extra years at home, the children had the opportunity to smooth out some of the rough edges under the direction of a caring, nurturing individual. An excerpt from a letter published in The Parent Educator and Family Report (Feb. 1983) follows:

"I was deeply touched after reading two articles you wrote dealing with the age of our children when we start them in school. I work on a part-time basis at ___ ____ School and one of my first interests is helping slow readers. If only parents could be convinced to keep them home even one more year, I am convinced it would make a lot of my service unnecessary."

Other arguments in favor of delayed school entrance are those which suggest that motor skill development, visual development, and related biological and physiological development is not sufficient in the four to seven year-old. Hewitt Researchers found, "Neither the maturity of their delicate central nervous system nor the balancing of the hemispheres of the brain, nor yet the insulation of their nerve pathways provide a basis for thoughtful learning before age eight or nine." Also, research on brain development indicates that the shifting of control from emotional centers to reasoning centers occurs between ages seven and eleven.

Other support for delayed school entrance might be found in the work of Dechant and Smith (1977) who, referencing five and six-year-olds beginning a formal program, state, "Reading disability often is caused by starting a child in a planned program before he is ready. Such a child cannot handle the day-to-day learning tasks and finds himself farther and farther behind as time goes by."

Eda J. LeShaun referencing "learn quick" methods makes a statement which can easily apply to early schooling. Having listed numerous "astonishing break-throughs in teaching two-year-olds to read and write and four-year-olds to speak at least two languages," LeShaun in

*The Conspiracy Against Childhood states, "I think we will soon see that great damage has been done to children through forced intellectual feeding and that our children will be paying the price for these pseudo-scientific approaches to learning. There will be more school failures, more resistance to learning, and increase in severe emotional disorders which reflect our hysterical and ill-conceived impatience with growth and our intolerance of the normal, gradual, individual ways in which children grow and learn."*

*Some authorities on the subject of maternal deprivation support the belief that a child taken from home too early for schooling is vulnerable to mental and emotional problems that will affect his learning, motivation, and behavior. "Throughout the experimental work in this area, there is considerable evidence that early schooling and parental deprivation are prime contributors to childhood maladjustment, motivational loss and a wide variety of other physical and behavioral problems (Moore and Moore)."*

*Socially, children are unprepared to resist negative peer influence and require more firming up and directing from the home. "While the family instills in a child the unique values and traditions it deems important, the school and peer world associated with it shape a child to fit into society at large (Costello, 1982)." It is the feeling of many, especially those in the Christian community, that the role of and influence of the public school system and peers is not totally desirable especially not at the age (3 - 8/10) of such potential influence.*

*Arguments against early schooling, which cover the range of physical, biological, emotional and social, find their greatest support from the research.*

## Viable Alternatives

The question to be addressed now is "What are the alternatives to early schooling?" Are children to stay home till age eight or ten and twiddle their thumbs? Clearly, state and county laws will not allow that type of irresponsibility on the part of parents, but a very real and fast-growing alternative to formal early schooling is the Home Schools.

Some 34 states permit home schools by law under certain conditions, and other states permit them by court decision. These home-centered educational programs are structured and monitored by governing agencies or school personnel to insure appropriate learning is taking place. The advantage: the child is being educated, loved and nurtured in a warm, no pressure, secure place. He is encouraged to think, to create, to make decisions based on learned values without the pressure of peers.

Home schools are often assisted by home school suppliers who develop materials designed specifically for home schools. A modification of the home school may be the neighborhood-home schools where several parents or caring others welcome and allow children to learn in an atmosphere which seeks the best for each child. Mother-Child Home Programs are also a viable adaptation of the original design. In this program, trained assistants visit homes at regular intervals to work with parents and suggest appropriate ways of nurturing a child's development without taxing him. Proposals are in the works for traveling teachers on state or local payrolls to monitor these home schools and to coordinate them with existing social service programs.

Earl Schaefer, professor of Maternal and Child Health at the University of North Carolina calls home-centered programs "the current most likely solution to the child-development delima."

## Implications

If home-schools are to become a major movement of the 1980's, teachers should be somewhat knowledgeable as to the objectives and approaches. Also, for the classroom teacher, resource person, consultant or other educators, career opportunities may become rather extensive in this area. Further, as teachers - having the knowledge of the developmental nature of students and the individual readiness levels - we can be more sensitive to the sometimes temporal learning capacity of our students. We will be more prone to try to understand the reticent learner than to label him or pass him to someone else.

As administrators, it is important to be abreast of the major trends in education, especially as these trends affect one's county or state programs. Further, it is hoped that administrators will tend to view the objectivity, not disdain or trepidation, this new way of looking at and addressing readiness.

## Conclusions

The idea of delayed formal school entry is no fly-by-night fad. The Office of Child Development in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare is embarking on a project called Home Start, intended to redirect the focus of early-childhood education from the school to the home. Although delayed entry may not be appropriate for every child, especially for some of the more retarded children, the more home oriented, secure child-centered systems are believed to provide the child with what he needs most during those formative years - the time and space to find out whom he is and to like himself.

Although the number of working mothers in our society is said to be responsible in part for the push for earlier education, the number

*is not likely to decrease or even to level off significantly. This would seemingly be a minus for the argument for delayed schooling. Still, the delayed entrance with home-neighborhood schools appears viable.*

*When we observe the child who stumbles insecurely through kindergarten and the early grades being passed by his friends who were delayed a year or so, and when we observe his learning retention remaining lower than that of his later starting peers who have become more stable and highly motivated - it cannot escape us that there are lessons to be learned and that beyond our doors lie alternatives. We need to give our children and our schools a fair chance.*

*"By giving our schools 'green grain' for their mills, we make their task impossible (Moore and Moore)."*

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